

MESSAGE TO SOLDIERS LEAVING FOB  
FBANCE 433

the general public is unacquainted. . . . I wish I had brought with me a copy of a telegram received to-day from Victor Hollander, secretary of the Illinois Federation of Labor. I can tell you that not only labor men but a member of the Chamber of Commerce of East St. Louis warned the men engaged in luring negroes from the South that they were to be used in undermining the conditions of the laborer in East St. Louis. The luring of these colored men to East St. Louis is on a par with the behavior of the brutal, reactionary, and tyrannous forces that existed in Old Borne.'

The audience which contained a large number of Russian Socialists applauded Gompers vigorously. Boosevelt, visibly indignant, asked the chairman for permission to say a word in response, and moving to the front of the platform, said with great earnestness:

"I am not willing that a meeting called to commemorate the birth of democracy and justice in Bussia 'shall seem to have given any approval of or apology for the infamous brutalities that have been committed on negroes at East St. Louis. Justice with me is not a mere phrase or form of words. How can we praise the people of Bussia for doing justice to the men within their boundaries if we in any way apologize for murder committed on the helpless? In the past I have listened to the same form of excuse advanced on behalf of the Bnssian autocracy for pogroms of Jews. Not for a moment shall I acquiesce in any apology for the murder of women and children in our own

country. I am  
a democrat of democrats. I will do anything  
for the labor-  
ing man except what is wrong/

Striding over to Mr. Gompers, who was  
seated, he shook  
his clenched fist close to his face and said:  
"I don't care  
a snap of my finger for any telegram from the  
head of the  
strongest labor union in Illinois. This took  
place in a  
Northern State, where the whites outrank  
the negroes  
twenty to one. And if in that State the white  
men cannot  
protect their rights by their votes against an  
insignificant  
minority, and have to protect them by the  
murder of women